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Syn. 5.70.16

Concerning a Treaty:

TO RECONCILE THE
DIFFERENCES,
AND VNITE THE SPIRITS OF
GODLY MINISTERS.
WHO

have hitherto stood for a *Reformation.*

Three things offer themselves to be considered in a Treaty of this nature, at this time.

1. *What should induce conscionable men now to desire such a Treaty.*

2. *What the proper Aime and Designe of the Treaty should be.*

3. *By what wayes and meanes it may become effectnall to reach that Aime and Designe.*

Of the Inducements to a Treaty.



IF either the respect which is due to God, or the consideration of our own safety, or the desire and hope of a happy issue to our publick undertakings, can move and affect conscionable and rational men, to a matter of duty which is easily performed, then upon these inducements a Treaty between godly Ministers, who have hitherto sought joyntly for a Reformation; but now are divided about the way of advancing it, should be set a foot.

For first, in respect of Gods Commandements, and of the Ministerial work of the Gospel: there is nothing so much recommended to us in the Word; as the way of Love, of Unity, of Peace, and of brotherly kindnes; whereby we are obliged to provoke one another unto all good works, and to avoid all occasions of offences which are dishonourable unto the name

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of God, and to the Holy Profession: now to bring this to passe amongst us, nothing can at this time be so effectual as a Treaty, to bring godly Ministers together, that they may understand rightly one another, and be joynd in one spirit, and one mind, for their mutual edification.

Secondly, in respect of our own safety, there is nothing that can prevent the imminent dangers, whereinto unavoidably we must fall, by these divisions, and heart-burnings if they continue, but an amiable Treaty; that same better assurance being had of each others intentions: thereby a reconciliation may be wrought in our broken affections; for if this distance wherein we stand continue, it will not only grow insensibly greater and greater, through the working of our corruptions; but through the practices of common enemies, who cunningly blow the Coales of our discontentments, it will soone break forth into open hostility, and prove in end our finall overthrow and desolation: whereat our adversaries will Triumph, as at the revenge of all the evils, which by our former Conjunction, did befall them.

And thirdly, in respect of the issue of our hopes in these undertakings: as it is not rationally possible to expect any comfortable success therein, without the settlement and quieting of the spirits of those that are to be the joynt-actors thereof: so it is not imaginable, that their spirits can be settled or quieted towards each other, except they understand one another, and be satisfied in each others aimes, better then of late they have been; and this cannot be effected any other way but by a Treaty: all the comforts then which we can rationally expect in the purchase of our liberty, from all these endeavours, and all the credit which amongst Forraigners, is to be wished for towards our undertakings, depends wholly upon a better settlement of our Affaires: this upon a better intelligence with one another, and this upon a friendly Treaty to reconcile differences and divided affections, which onely can frustrate the enjoyment of our hopes.

Of the proper Aime and Design thereof.

AS our Aimes are, so our Designes will be contrived in some proportion thereunto, if then in this Treaty our first Aime be above all things to advance the glory of God in the propagation

gation of the Gospel, by our unblameable walking before him in his wayes of Truth, Love, and Peace, and our next Aimes subordinate hereunto, be to remove offensive Cariages, to rectifie mutual mistakes, to beget a good intelligence, in reference to common and necessary concernments, to agree upon meanes and wayes of mutual edification; to seeke a Concurrence to uphold the holy Profession in things wherein there is a full agreement: Then the design of the Treaty should not be to dispute and debate matters of particular interest, and to justifie our selves, or condemn others in things past; but to deliberate and consult about the undoubted means and wayes, how according to the will of God, the forementioned Aimes may be advanced with joynt consent and brotherly correspondency in time to come better then heretofore: notwithstanding some latitude of different opinions and practices, which in circumstantial matters will fall in, and mutually ought to be tolerated, without giving or taking offence thereat.

How the Treaty may become succesfull towards this Designe.

TO work out this Design towards those ends, there must needes be some Preparatives used towards the bringing on of the Treaty; and some Rules settled, how to proceed therein suitable to the Aimes of Truth and Peace.

Concerning the Preparatives.

IT is in many things a certain Truth: *Dimidium facti qui bene cepit habet*, and to begin a work of this nature well, there is nothing so material as to prevent sinister impressions; and again, a rational confidence of the sincerity of each others intentions towards it, and thereupon to lay an obligation upon both parties to be constant towards the prosecution thereof, and to do all this, I shall humbly offer these following Expedients.

1. Both parties must be made thoroughly acquainted with the real designe, and fully assured, that nothing is pretended, but what is really intended, as in the presence of God. Now to acquaint them with the real Designe, and beget this confidence in them; some chuse moderate, known, and godly men, which are of repute for judgment and integrity with both sides; are to be made use of, to insinuate the Design unto them: as from themselves by the dictates of their own Conscience, lest it seeme to proceed from some plot in the State upon them, which to prevent meanes should be used to bring some of each side together, to set them upon the drawing up, or upon the approving of a plat-form of a Treaty, conducing to these ends: obliging them to acquaint their Brethren of each side therewith, as a matter of necessary advice which they think themselves obliged to suggest; for nothing but this will prevent objections, & dash jealousies.

2. When the mindes of moderate and leading men are thus some-what prepared, & the fiercer sort taken off from the edge of their fearful suspiciousness; then some forme of a Declaration should be at hand, to be pre-

sented to those that should approve of the design, that setting their hands to it, they may shew their willingness to concur with others in a Treaty of Reconcilement, and to be engaged in the prosecution thereof by way of Council and advice.

3. The subscriptions of both sides being gained severally to the same draught: the Ruling power should be made acquainted with the free inclinations of both parties to a Treaty among themselves, and his countenance and concurrence should be desired towards the advancement thereof; not only that he may not be possessed with any jealousy against it; or receive sinister & false informations concerning it; but that he should be intreated to depute some of the Council of State to be present at it, as well to assist with advice towards the furthering thereof, as in the outward forme of proceeding and carriage of businesses to give countenance thereunto, that it may be of a publick nature, and freed from disturbances and contempt.

4. When the ruling power should have approved of the Designe, and appointed some to be present at it to these effects: the first meeting should be appointed for a Fast wherein both parties should humble their soules joyntly before God, confessing their sins and miscarriages, praying unto him for grace in time to come, &c. And at the end of that Action they should ratifie and declare unto each other, as in the presence of God their willingness to be mutually reconciled, as Brethren in the Gospel ought to be according to Gods will; and to that effect, that they are resolved not onely to treat ingenuously and lovingly to rectifie things that are amisse; but that they will endeavour in all their privat and publick Carriages towards each other, and in reference to the work in hand, to be without offence, and not to suffer any animosities, clamors, or complaints to break forth, especially in a publick way of preaching or writing; and in case any unexpected matters of grievance should fall in on either side, that they should not be instantly imputed unto, or laid open before all; but that on each side some should be appointed, to whom such grievances should be opened; that a friendly course may be taken to rectifie the same, & to make these Resolutions more valid; some Act might be drawn up containing these promises, and the names of those that should be the hearers of grievances on each side; which Act should be subscribed by all the Members of each side, and delivered to the other party as a mutual assurance of their voluntary engagement thereunto, nor would it be amisse that they should joyn to intreat the Ruling power, that he would by his influence over the publick, take notice of such as should be offensive in any such kind, and to appoint some who should call them to an account of such proceedings, wherein they should seeme to disturbe the peaceable inclinations of Brethren who are seeking the wayes of mutual Reconciliation.

Con-

Concerning the pro- vention of the Treaty

THe Dutch have a Proverb to this effect, That a *busnesse well geordo- well ordered is finished.* There is much truth in this saying: *neert is ge- daen merck,* If then we can fore-cast the way of ordering all things so just-ly and equally towards the fore-mentioned common aimes of the Treaty, that neither side shall finde any cause of exception thereat, we may hope that God will blesse this designe, and not suffer it to miscarry. And to this effect I shall offer these following thoughts, as an humble advice to be considered by those that shall think themselves concerned therein.

I conceive then, that this Treaty (that it may reach the ends fore-mentioned, and be subservient to the designe in hand) should be ordered in respect of the places of meeting; and in respect of the proceedings of parties in those places.

The place of meeting should be such, wherein both parties may have a distinct chamber to meet by themselves, & a comon room wherein to meet and appear before the Deputies of the ruling power. In the common room there should be three Tables: one where the Deputy or Deputies of the State should sit at; and the other two set opposite to one another where the treating parties should sit at.

The proceedings of the parties in each of their places, should be regulated by the same Rules as well of actions as of conferences.

The actions are of two sorts; some are to be of each party within it self; some of both parties towards each other.

To regulate the proceedings of each party within it selfe, that it may not be subdivided, and clash about its own proceedings, I would advise thus:

First, that all who should have subscribed the first Declaration and the second Act, to meet and to treat; should come together to chuse from among themselves one or two Scribes; and three or four who should be called Treaters in the name of the rest.

Secondly, they should determine a *Directory* for the actions and duties of their Scribes and Treaters, lest they take too much upon them over their brethren, and their misbehaviours in their places, redound to the disturbance of the Treaty. And I suppose this *Directory* might be to this effect:

1. That nothing should be counted an act of the Treaty; but

but that which passeth from one party to the other in the name of all in writing.

2. That no writing should be given by either party to their Treators to be offered to the other side as an act of their Treaty, but that wherein all the subscribers to the Treaty on that side from which it is offered, do agree, *nemine contradicente*: for if any do contradict, it cannot be counted an Act of the whole party; and neither party should be divided within it self.

3. That to draw those writings whereunto all of each side within themselves should agree; or from which none should disagree, the method should be this: At the end of every meeting let a point of deliberation be named, which shall be the subject of the Treaty at the next joynt-meeting. Let a due time be allowed to think upon that point: Let every one of the Subscribers be obliged to bring his advice concerning that point in writing expressed in brieve and orderly Aphorismes: Let all those writings be put into two or three hands, who shall sum them up in that wherein they all agree: let that summary draught be read at their peculiar meeting, that all may approve, or at least none be concluded in that which he might happily disapprove. Then let it be put into the hand of the Treators, to be delivered at the common meeting of both parties to the other side as an act of Treaty.

4. That no Treator be allowed to say or do any thing in the name of all, but that which he shall be directed to say and doe by all: and if he should say or do otherwise any thing, it shall be free for any to stand up and disclaim that which he shall say and do, declaring it not to be valid in the name of all.

5. That all the appointed Treators should be obliged to be alwayes present at all the meetings, and in case of necessary absence, to get some body of their brethren to supply their places, lest the Treaty might be prejudiced thereby.

6. That the Scribes of each side should keep all the writings which every one shall give in upon all matters of deliberation; and that a double of the summary collection of Suffrages, shall be in a readinesse for every one who will take a copy of it.

7. That in the peculiar meetings no constant and perpetuall Chairman shall be appointed, but that every one shall preside therein as it falleth out to be his turn according to the order wherein his name shall be found in the List of subscriptions
unto

unto the first declaration for a Treaty.

8. That the Chairmans office shall be, 1. to begin and end the peculiar meeting with a prayer, 2. To receive the suffrages of deliberation in writing, and get a Committee of two or three at the most, to make a summary draught of consent, 3. to get the peculiar times of peculiar meetings appointed, so that all things may be prepared for the common meeting with the other side.

To regulate the proceedings of the one side towards the other at the common meeting, let both parties at the time appointed appear with their Scribes and Treators : Let the Treators deliver to each other (after a publick reading of that which they are to deliver) the acts of their advice upon the point whereof the Treaty is to be at that time. Let the precedency in reading and delivering acts be vicissitudinary, as also in beginning and ending the common meeting with prayers, *viz.* that the side whose turn it shall be to pray, shall be last in delivering its act and advice to the other. Let a new point of deliberation be nominated immediatly after both acts are delivered, and some proposition made by way of Querie agreed upon and put to paper concerning it : and to doe this, some two of each side should be deputed to draw it up, and offer it to the liking of both parties : Let the papers which are given by one side to the other, be read the second time, and an offer made by those that deliver them, that if any of the other side should desire any termes to be opened, or doubtfull expressions to be explained, that they should make their Querie of the thing which in the writing should seem to them to be doubtfull, and that the sense thereof should be made plain unto them. Let the papers which at each meeting are delivered and explained by one side to another, be taken into consideration by the side which doth receive them, to this effect, that it should return thereupon at the next meeting an answer declaring how far it doth consent thereunto : or in case it should not yeeld any consent at all ; or agree unto unto the substance thereof ; that then it should offer to the side from which it received the paper at the former meeting, some expedients tending to bring forth an agreement.

Thus much of the Actions : as for the Conferences they in like manner are to be of two sorts ; some which each party should entertain within it self : some which may be between both parties at their common meetings.

Concerning the conferences of each party within it self, although nothing can be prescribed to prejudge the liberty of Brethren, yet
advice

advice may be offered for their edification and prevention of subdivisions, I shall then desire it may be considered, whether these Rules will not be found expedient to be observed.

1. That all large discourses and speeches be avoided : *In multiloquio non deest peccatum.*

2. That no personall matters tending to complaints or reproaches be heard in any publick meetings, but that the persons appointed to redresse grievances, should be made acquainted therewith.

3. That no disputatory conferences by way of contradiction to different opinions, be entertained, but only declaratory by way of explication of each his own opinion in *thesi & antithesi*, and by way of deliberation what is more or lesse expedient, be allowed : & that in all such conferences the sum of that wherein on each side there is an agreement, be noted & put to paper by the Scribes, that wherein opinions may be different, the Scribes shall not be obliged to take notice of.

Concerning the conferences which may be between both parties, I would advise these things :

1. If it should not be permitted to any to make any speech, or large discourse either in his own name, or in the name of any other, far less to make complaints of grievances, & oblige others to make apologies and recriminations. these kinds of conferences have ruined our peace, chiefly when proud men, or passionate talkers have taken upon them to out-wit others, and manage the affaires of their own party to the disadvantage of the other.

2. That no matter of conference should be mentioned at the common meeting, but such as in writing is delivered from one side to another.

3. That concerning such matters no conference should be further entertained than that it shal be free for any one of either side to ask a question of those that have delivered a paper concerning their meaning of any thing contained therein ; and that it shal be free for the treaters of that side to whom the question is proposed, first to explain the meaning of the writing which is counted doubtful ; & in case they open it not fully enough, that then any other of the same side may adde to what the Treaters shall have delivered.

And beyond these bounds no conference should be allowed, nor matters of debate otherwise entertained than in writing, either declaratorily or deliberatively: Declaratorily in reference to the grounds of our judgement and practice : deliberatively in reference to the wayes and expedients of edification in love and agreement.

FINIS.

